



The Probation Chiefs Association Conference January 2010

A landmark occasion



Members of the Probation Chiefs Association (PCA) from across England and Wales met together for the association's two-day conference held in Leeds on 19 January to shape their association's future.

It was a conference of two halves designed to rise to the challenges of setting the priorities the association should follow and live up to the PCA's strap line: 'Leading on Probation.' Day one focused on the membership while Day 2 looked outwards with a wide range of guest speakers providing much food for thought.



The joint Vice-Chairs Steve Collett and Heather Munro developed Sue's opening theme. Steve Collett, on the topic of the PCA manifesto, said: "We have a unique opportunity to develop an inclusive, professional and powerful leadership voice." While Heather Munro, as the association's Public Relations lead, emphasised that for the PCA voice to ring true, its messages must be based "on the views fed by the membership consensus via the portfolios."

Keynote speaker, Cedric Fullwood, CBE, vividly conveyed how probation leadership in the past could inform and strengthen the PCA's present and future. Drawing on his experience as a former Chair of the Association of Chief Officers of Probation (ACOP), he said: "You and your colleagues are the guardians of this historical perspective. If you draw on it wisely, you will be the stronger for it as you face the future."



Sue Hall, PCA Chair, said: "This conference is going to be critical in how we shape where we go next. We have grasped the first rung of the ladder but there is a long way for us to go yet. The PCA is your PCA. This is the

time to make your real commitment, to have an influence through our manifesto and our research and thereby contribute to the national stage."

PCA Conference January 2010



Guest speakers included Michael Spurr, Chief Operating Officer, National Offender Management Service (NOMS) who congratulated Probation Chiefs on

all Areas in England and Wales obtaining Trust status, describing this as a "tremendous achievement." "You got there because of all the work you and your teams have done."

The main tenor of his speech NOMS into the Future, however, was starker: "It will be very difficult. We're moving into a different world with Probation Trusts from 1 April. So to come and be able to speak to you now is really quite timely."



Just how fundamentally different the criminal justice system might be was suggested by Jonathan Slater, Director General of Business Transformation,

Ministry of Justice (MoJ). He talked about Planning for joined-up Justice, inviting members to become, or nominate champions to inform the ministry's consultations.

Clare Harbord, Director of Communications, MoJ

was able to draw together the themes explored by Jonathan Slater and earlier PCA speakers by describing the vital part played by stakeholders and detailing the MoJ's role in government communications and specifically, its work with the media.



Professor Rob Canton, De Montfort University neatly brought the topic of probation back from the future to the present. But still the audience was not on home turf. His subject was Probation: the European dimension.



Over the two days members contributed to the PCA 3 year strategy, providing and receiving immediate feedback; and they were able to attend a wide variety of workshops ranging from Community Safety, Sentencing and Leadership and Development to Women Offenders, Public Protection, Developments in Approved Premises and Specifications, Benchmarking and Costs.

PCA members will find speeches in the documents section on the membership site.